



## **Development of the Gaves Greenway: for a route accessible to all**

Nowadays, Greenways are known and recognised paths. A wider concept than the simple cycle path, a Greenway is open to all non-motorised methods of locomotion. It is adapted to pedestrians, cyclists, roller-bladers, whether in the framework of tourism, leisure activities, or travel by the local population.

The idea for the Gaves Greenway came with the final closure of the Lourdes-Soulom railway line which was going to have a negative impact on the valleys. In 1996, under the influence of its President, Jean-Pierre Artiganave, the SMDRA became the project's sponsor and the Greenway was inaugurated on 1 July 2000.

Since then, the SMDRA has owned and managed the Greenway open to pedestrians, cyclists, roller-bladers and mobility-impaired users.

### **Tourism and Disability certification in 2005**



As soon as the SMDRA heard about this certification by the Tourism and Disability Association, all efforts were focused on adapting the infrastructure to meet its requirements. The aim was to obtain this certification in order to offer recognised access to this unique facility in the Pyrenees.

The infrastructure's assets: a small altitude difference (26 metres), a very smooth road surface, secure intersections and the benches and totems already in place met the certification's requirements (height, size of font, reading height, contrast)



Even before the final launch of the national certification, the Syndicat initiated a new phase of work to meet the certification's specifications:



- creation of **parking spaces** for Mobility-Impaired Users at the most important access points and at each car park. The access routes between the car parks and the greenway were also levelled.

- creation of **rest areas** with especially adapted benches (seat height).

- creation of a **pedestrian track** alongside the asphalt path with a different road surface to ensure the safety of users and in order to create a **guide** for the visually-impaired.



- **horizontal white marking** to show the middle of the path, as well as its uses: asphalt for cyclists, roller-bladers... and a pedestrianised track for pedestrians

*In December 2005, certification was granted for three disabilities (a few elements need to be perfected for visual disability certification), a first in France for this type of site.*

## Adaptation of signposting for visual disability (2010)



In order to adapt the Greenway's signposting to all disabilities, and, in particular visual disability, the SMDRA invested in new signposting which was installed in 2010.

This signposting complies with the certification's requirements concerning: the size of signs, reading distance, height of information, size of letters, colour of pictograms, colour contrast, clarity of messages, etc.

The SMDRA wanted to go even further by adapting these different signs for blind or visually-impaired users. To that end, all the messages available on the boards were written in Braille and the Greenway's main entrance points were equipped with a sound beacon broadcasting a welcome message in three languages.

The Information Service Points situated at four sites along the Greenway (the most popular access points and entrances to the Greenway) were accompanied by a **relief plan with a Braille legend** depicting the entire length of the Greenway.



Photovoltaic board to power the audio terminal

Three **Information Service Points** are equipped with an audio beacon broadcasting the welcome message in three languages. These messages are triggered by sensors clearly visible on the board.

The **totems** comprise a Braille brochure below the French text, as well as an engraved depiction of the Greenway.



Braille board and inclined relief plan

Thanks to these new amenities, the Gaves Greenway was awarded Tourism and Disability certification along the route's entire 18 km for four disabilities in December 2010.

